CCSD's

DISABILITY INFORMATION SHEET

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Persons with Disabilities and

- **A profile of vision/hearing loss**
- **The impact of collective bargaining agreements**

In this 15th edition of the *CCSD's Disability Information Sheets*, we provide statistics on persons with both vision and hearing loss, using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) conducted by Statistics Canada in 2000-2001.[1] In the second part of this edition, we provide information on the impact of collective bargaining agreements for workers with disabilities, using data from Statistics Canada's 2001 Workplace and Employee Survey (WES).[2]

Profile of Persons with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

It can be difficult for individuals with a disability to overcome barriers that are often in their way. For people with more than one type of disability, the combined barriers can be extremely difficult to navigate. In future editions of these *Information Sheets*, we hope to examine some of the "classic combinations" of multiple disability types (such as mobility and agility, for example).

In this edition, we provide a profile of persons who have both vision and hearing loss. While this combination represents a smaller proportion of the population than other "classic" disability combinations, it presents unique challenges because it involves two sensory-based disabilities. Additional research in this area is being conducted by the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind (CNSDB), in partnership with the Canadian Deaf-Blind and Rubella Association (CDBRA), to survey deaf-blind persons in all

[1] The CCHS contains health-related data on persons aged 12 and older in all provinces and territories, except those living on Indian reserves, Canadian Forces Bases, and some remote areas. With a survey response rate of 84.7%, the responding sample size was 131,535. Data collection began in September 2000 and continued over a 14-month period.

[2] The WES surveys individuals who are employed and their employers. Excluded from this survey are workplaces involved in crop and animal production; fishing, hunting and trapping; private households; public administration; and workplaces in the Territories.

Canadian provinces and territories to obtain more detailed information profiles. This joint project will also include a discussion of the service needs of these individuals and their parents/advocates, as well as detailing the services that are available to this population. The report, which is expected in the summer of 2004, will also present personal stories of the barriers and successes experienced by deaf-blind individuals and their parents/advocates.[3]

Profile

Based on data from the 2000/01 CCHS, there were approximately 19,600 individuals aged 12 and older with some degree of both vision loss[4] and hearing loss, but not complete loss of either sense. An additional 34,700 individuals reported partial loss of one of these senses and a total loss of the other, and 15,500 reported a total loss of both vision and hearing. For the purposes of this profile, we have examined these three groups together as persons with combined vision and hearing loss.[5] In some instances, we also provide comparative statistics for individuals with no vision or hearing loss and for those who have a loss of one, but not the other.

Gender and Age

Of the roughly 69,700 Canadians (aged 12 and older) with combined hearing and vision loss[6] in 2000/01, 56% were women and 44% were men. The vast majority (70%) were seniors, with about 15% under age 45 and another 15% aged 45 to 64.

Where do they live?

Ontario has the largest population, and it was also home to the highest proportion of persons with combined vision and hearing loss (about 44%); about 21% lived in Quebec, 8% in the Maritimes, 13% in the Prairies, and 13% in British Columbia.[7]

Educational Attainment

Persons with combined vision and hearing loss were less than half as likely to be post-secondary graduates as those with no vision or hearing loss. Among those aged 20 and older, 23.2% of those with a combined vision and hearing loss were post-secondary graduates, compared with

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The CCSD is a United Way member agency.

[3] CNSDB is a consumer/advocacy group representing individuals who are deaf-blind. The CDBRA is an advocacy/service organization primarily representing people with congenital deaf-blindness. The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS), a research and education organization in Winnipeg, is coordinating the research portion of the project, which is funded by Human Resources Development Canada. The project will include focus group research with deaf-blind persons in seven Canadian locations and three focus groups for parents/advocates.

The final project report will be available at the end of June 2004 and will be posted at www.cnsdb.ca and www.cdbra.ca. For further information, contact Stan Munroe, Project Coordinator at 1-866-420-7925.

[4] If an individual's vision could be corrected by using glasses or contact lenses, they were not included as having a vision loss.

[5] Due to small sample sizes, we are unable to provide detailed estimates for each of these groups separately, so they are combined here, recognizing that there are varying degrees of disability within this larger group.

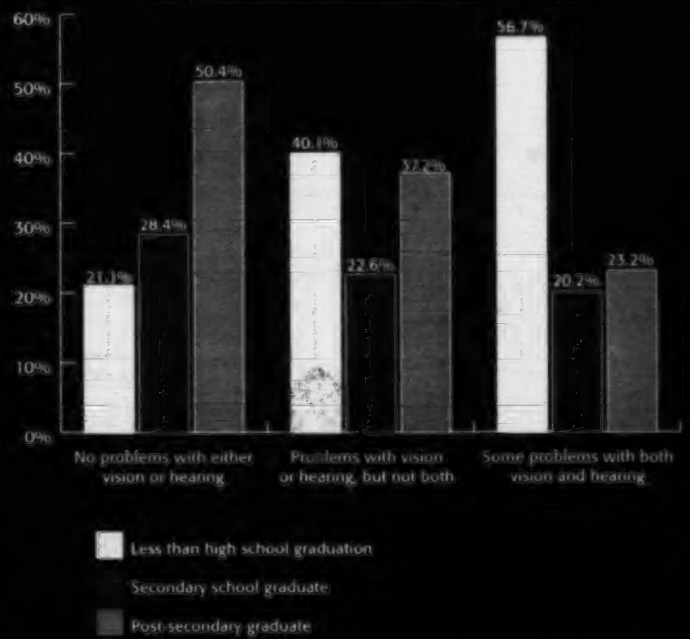
[6] Disabilities range from partial loss of both senses to total loss of both.

[7] Numbers for the Territories cannot be released due to low sample size.

50.4% of those with neither vision nor hearing loss, and 37.2% of those with loss of either vision or hearing, but not both.[8]

Those with combined vision and hearing loss were less likely to have completed their high school education than the other groups. As illustrated in Figure 1, 56.7% of those with combined vision and hearing loss reported less than a high school education, compared with 40.1% of those with either a vision or a hearing loss, and 21.1% of those with neither disability.

Figure 1 **Persons aged 20 and older, with and without Vision/Hearing Problems, by Educational Attainment, 2000/01**



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 2000/01.

Income

The CCHS provided a measure of income adequacy based on household income and the size of the household. Individuals were divided into four income quartiles on that basis.[9] Persons with combined vision and hearing loss were "over represented" in the lowest household income quartile. For example, 11.2% of persons with no vision or hearing problems were found in the lowest income quartile, whereas three times that proportion (35.7%) of those with combined vision and hearing loss were found there. Another 39.4% of persons with combined vision and hearing loss were found in the second-lowest quartile, compared with 21.8% of those with no vision or hearing problems. This means that over three-quarters of all persons with combined vision and hearing loss had the least adequate incomes (see Figure 2).

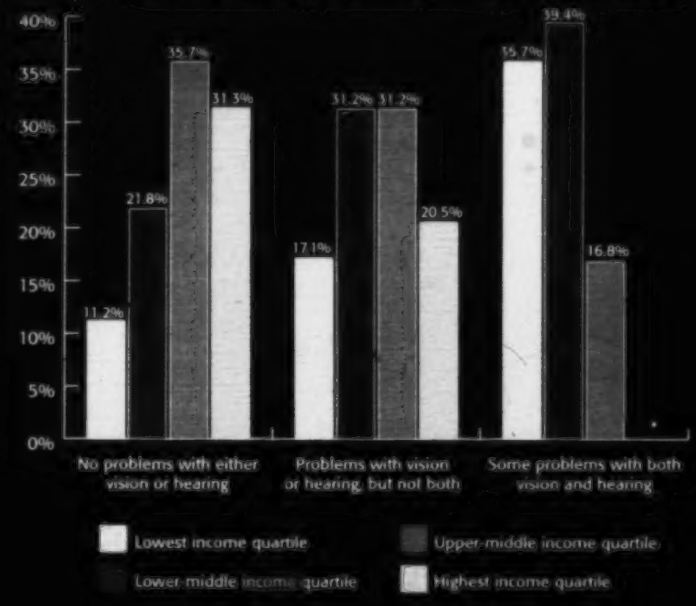
The number of persons with combined vision and hearing loss found in the highest income quartile was so low, the figure cannot be released due to small sample size. By contrast, however, 31.3% of those with no vision or hearing loss were in the highest income quartile. Among individuals with either vision or hearing loss, 20.5% had household incomes in the top quartile.

Some, but certainly not all, of these income differences are related to age (see Figure 3-A).

[8] Some of these educational differences may be age-related, since persons over age 65 tend to have lower levels of high school graduation and those with both vision and hearing loss are more likely to be over 65. However, additional analysis of these data indicate that even within age groups, this trend exists. Unfortunately, a low sample size prevents the release of these data.

[9] These are not true quartiles in the sense that 25% of the population is found in each group.

Figure 2 **Persons with and without Vision/Hearing Problems, by Income Adequacy, 2000/01**

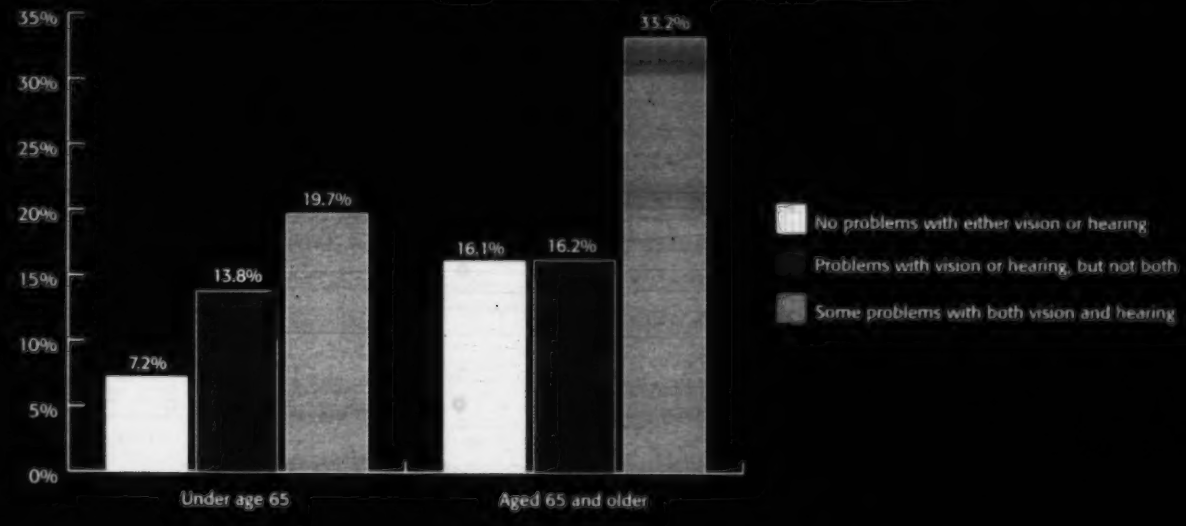


* Sample size too small to be released.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 2000/01.

Regardless of vision/hearing status, seniors were more likely than non-seniors to have a household income below $15,000. The data also indicate that those with combined vision and hearing loss were more likely than the other two groups to be in this lower income situation, even within the same age group. For example, 19.7% of those under age 65 who had combined vision/hearing loss had a household income below $15,000, compared with 7.2% of those with no vision or hearing problem. Among seniors aged 65 and older, 33.2% of those with combined vision and hearing loss and 16.1% of those with no vision or hearing problem reported household incomes below $15,000.

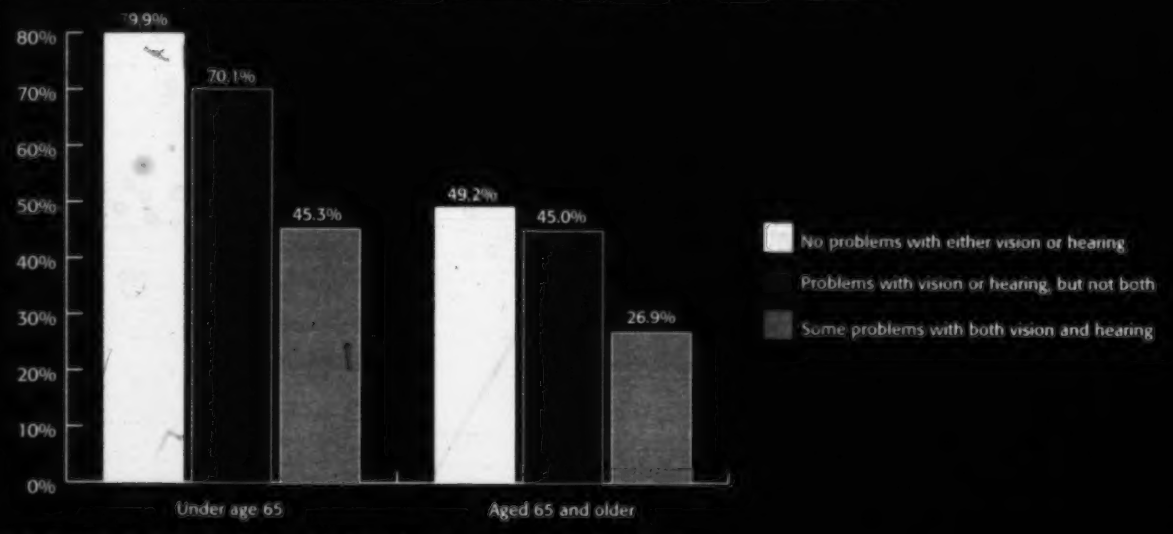
Similarly, the likelihood of having a household income of $30,000 or more goes down with age and with the presence of a combined vision and

Figure 3-A **Persons with Household Incomes under $15,000, with or without Vision/Hearing Problems, by Age Group, 2000/01**



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 2000/01.

Figure 3-B **Persons with Household Incomes over $30,000, with or without Vision/Hearing Problems, by Age Group, 2000/01**



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 2000/01.

hearing loss. Among those under age 65, 79.9% of persons without vision or hearing loss had household incomes of $30,000+, compared with only 45.3% among those with vision and hearing loss (see Figure 3-B). One factor which probably contributes to these large differences is the source of the household income. For people under 65, employment was the main income source for 88.1% of those with no vision or hearing loss, while it was the main income source for only 40.1% of those with combined vision and hearing loss.

Among seniors aged 65 and older, 49.2% of individuals without vision or hearing problems had household incomes of $30,000 or more; only about half that proportion of seniors (26.9%) with combined vision and hearing loss were in this situation.

Chronic Health Conditions and Vision/Hearing Loss

Persons with combined vision and hearing loss were more likely than those with no vision or hearing loss (as well as those with a loss of only one sense) to have asthma, arthritis/rheumatism, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, cataracts, and glaucoma. In particular, seniors with combined vision and hearing loss were much more likely to have heart disease than were those with no vision or hearing loss (34.9% compared with 19.1%), more likely to have cataracts (37.9% compared with 19.1%), and to have glaucoma (20.2% compared with 5.2%). This link between vision and hearing loss and other chronic health conditions requires further investigation.

Collective Bargaining Agreements and Workers with Disabilities

Cindy Wiggins, a Senior Researcher at the Canadian Labour Congress, found that "it is becoming more common for collective agreements to contain provisions prohibiting discrimination on one or more grounds."[10] She also identified collective bargaining gains as an important step in "overcoming the severe economic disadvantage persons with disabilities continue to experience."[11] In fact, examining data from the 2001 Workplace and Employee Survey (WES), we find that workers with disabilities do tend to have more favourable workplace outcomes when they are covered by collective bargaining agreements, particularly in the areas of training and wages.

Training

Tables 4-A and 4-B provide training profiles[12] of workers with and without disabilities by gender and coverage by a collective bargaining agreement. Overall, coverage by a collective bargaining agreement is associated with a greater likelihood of having some workplace training and, in most cases, having access to both classroom and on-the-job training. This relationship is stronger among those with disabilities and strongest of all among men with disabilities.

The training gap between those with and those without disabilities narrows when the individual is covered by a collective bargaining agreement – particularly for men. For example, 61.9% of men with disabilities who were not covered by a collective agreement received no training, whereas only 46.1% of men without disabilities who had no collective bargaining agreement received no training. When there was a collective bargaining agreement in place, access to training opportunities improved – particularly for men with disabilities. Among men without disabilities, 44.7% had no training, and among men with disabilities, 49.6% had no training – a big improvement from the 61.9% of their peers not covered by a collective agreement.

Among women with disabilities, 59.3% of those with no collective bargaining agreement went without training, compared with 46.9% of those who were covered by such an agreement. However, while having a collective bargaining agreement provides more favourable training prospects for women with disabilities, the gap between those with and those without disabilities does not narrow as much for women as it does for men. Among women without disabilities, 38.2% of those who were covered by a collective bargaining agreement received no training, compared with 46.9% of their counterparts with disabilities. In fact, women with disabilities had the least favourable training profile of any group.

Wages

Men with or without disabilities had somewhat similar wage profiles when they were covered by a collective bargaining agreement. When there was no such agreement, men without disabilities had more favourable wage profiles than did those with disabilities.

[10] *Disability Provisions in Collective Agreements in Canada*, (page 5), paper delivered at CLC Unions Mobilizing for Disability Rights, 1st National Disability Rights Conference, November 2000.

[11] Ibid, page 1.

[12] This refers to training in the previous 12 months.

Table 4-A **Collective Bargaining Agreements and Training Profiles of Men with and without Disabilities**

	Has Collective Bargaining Agreement		No Collective Bargaining Agreement	
Type of Training	Men with disabilities	Men without disabilities	Men with disabilities	Men without disabilities
No training	49.6%	44.7%	61.9%	46.1%
Classroom only	20.0%	27.5%	17.1%	18.8%
On-the-job only	21.7%	15.5%	14.4%	21.6%
Classroom and on-the-job	8.7%*	12.4%	6.6%*	13.5%
Total	100.0%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%

*Numbers should be used with caution.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Workplace and Employee Survey*, 2000/01.

Table 4-B **Collective Bargaining Agreements and Training Profiles of Women with and without Disabilities**

	Has Collective Bargaining Agreement		No Collective Bargaining Agreement	
Type of Training	Women with disabilities	Women without disabilities	Women with disabilities	Women without disabilities
No training	46.9%	38.2%	59.3%	48.3%
Classroom only	23.9%	28.9%	16.9%*	19.6%
On-the-job only	18.1%	17.7%	12.3%*	21.4%
Classroom and on-the-job	11.1%*	15.3%	11.4%*	10.7%
Total	100.0%	100.1%	99.9%	100.0%

*Numbers should be used with caution.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Workplace and Employee Survey*, 2000/01.

For example, among men with disabilities, only 22.8% of those not covered by a collective bargaining agreement earned wages in the highest quartile, compared with 29.3% of their non-disabled counterparts (see Table 5-A). Among those covered by a collective bargaining agreement, however, the proportion of men with disabilities who had earnings in the top quartile almost doubled to 41.4%, compared with 39.1% for those without disabilities.

There appear to be wage benefits associated with collective bargaining agreements for female workers with disabilities, as well. For women with disabilities not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, 12.7% earned in the top wage quartile, and this rose to 18.3% for those covered by an agreement (see Table 5-B). More importantly, however, the percentage of women with disabilities with earnings in the lowest wage quartile decreased dramatically from 51.7% among those with no collective bargaining agreement, to 19.1% for those protected by such an agreement. (Among women without disabilities, the corresponding figures were 36.4% and 12.6%, respectively.)

Table 5-A **Hourly-wage Quartiles and Collective Bargaining Agreements of Men with and without Disabilities**

	Has Collective Bargaining Agreement		No Collective Bargaining Agreement	
Wage Quartiles	**Men with disabilities**	**Men without disabilities**	**Men with disabilities**	**Men without disabilities**
Lowest quartile	11.2%*	8.7%	30.0%	23.2%
Second-lowest quartile	12.4%	18.7%	23.7%	21.5%
Second-highest quartile	35.1%	33.6%	23.6%	25.9%
Highest quartile	41.4%	39.1%	22.8%	29.3%
	100.1%	100.1%	100.1%	99.9%

*Numbers should be used with caution.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Workplace and Employee Survey*, 2000/01.

Table 5-B **Hourly-wage Quartiles and Collective Bargaining Agreements of Women with and without Disabilities**

	Has Collective Bargaining Agreement		No Collective Bargaining Agreement	
Wage Quartiles	**Women with disabilities**	**Women without disabilities**	**Women with disabilities**	**Women without disabilities**
Lowest quartile	19.1%	12.6%	51.7%	36.4%
Second-lowest quartile	35.8%*	29.5%	21.9%	29.4%
Second-highest quartile	26.8%*	32.8%	13.7%	19.1%
Highest quartile	18.3%*	25.2%	12.7%	15.1%
Total	100.0%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%

*Numbers should be used with caution.
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Workplace and Employee Survey*, 2000/01.

From these data, it is evident that collective bargaining agreements do improve the wage profile for women with disabilities, but they do not completely close the gap between the wages of women with and those without disabilities, nor do they remove the gap between the wages of women and men with disabilities.

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